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(56) Documents Cited

GB 2224450 A

WO 2001/010516 A1

US 5431403 A

GB 2121297 A

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(54) Abstract Title

Apparatus for practising golf putts

(57) A practice putting green comprises a planar member 2 formed of slate or similar smooth material. A layer of simulated grass or felted material 8 is located on the surface of the planar member and includes a hole 5 adjacent to one end to receive the ball. An inclined chute 17 may be included to return the ball to the player. The planar member is supported in a horizontal position by a plurality of adjustable feet 11.

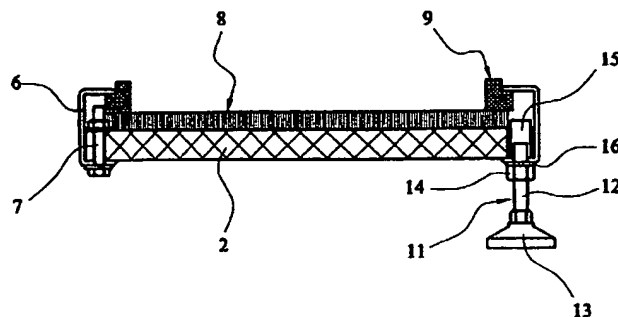


FIG. 3

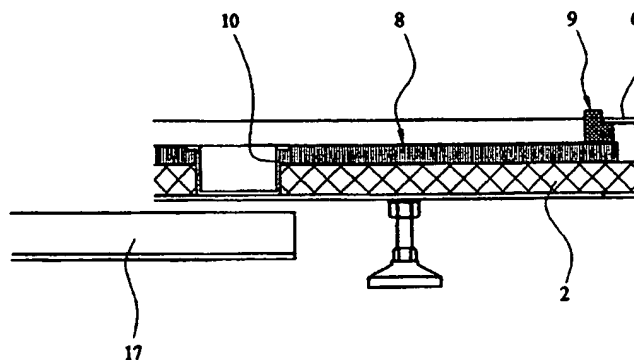


FIG. 4

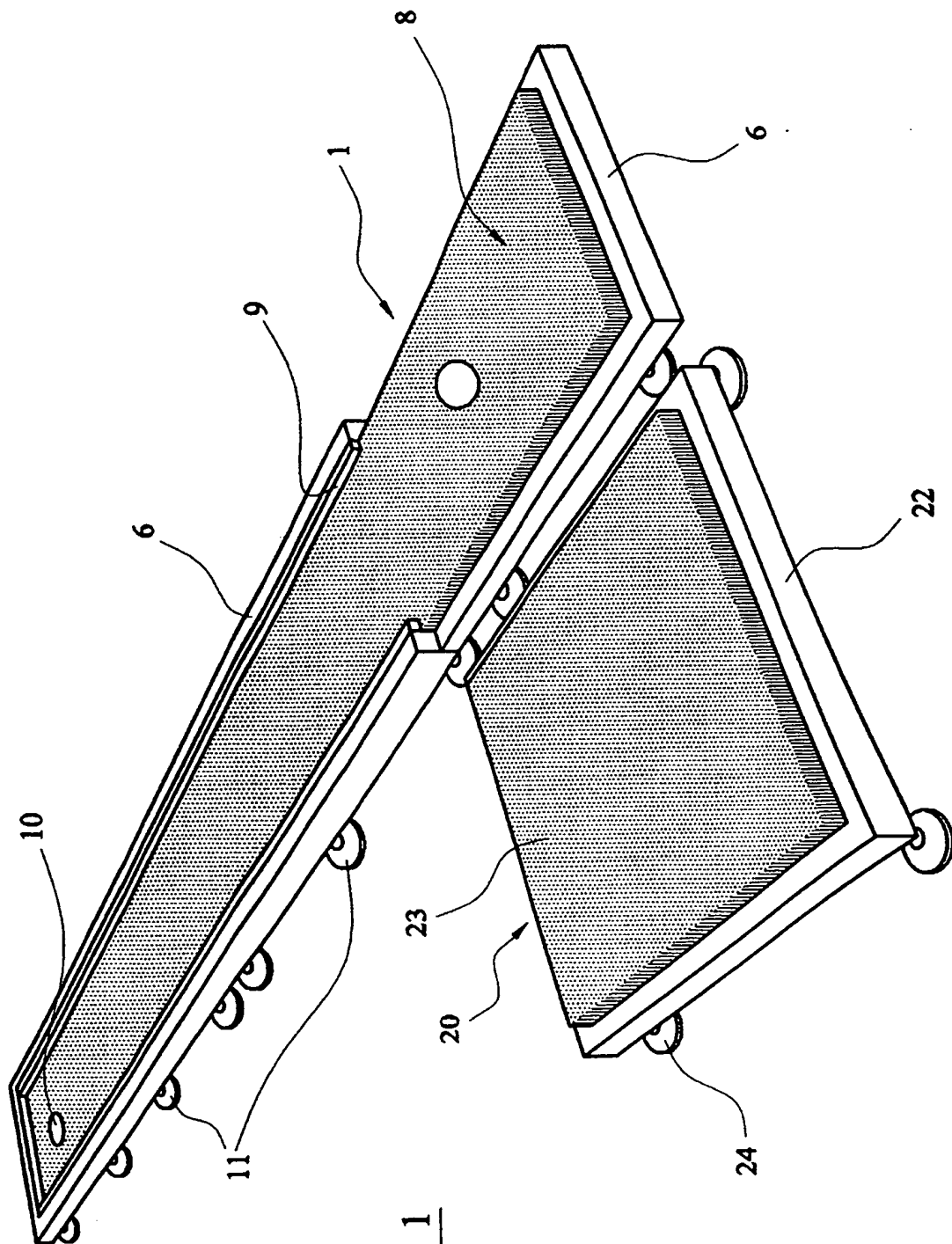


FIG. 1

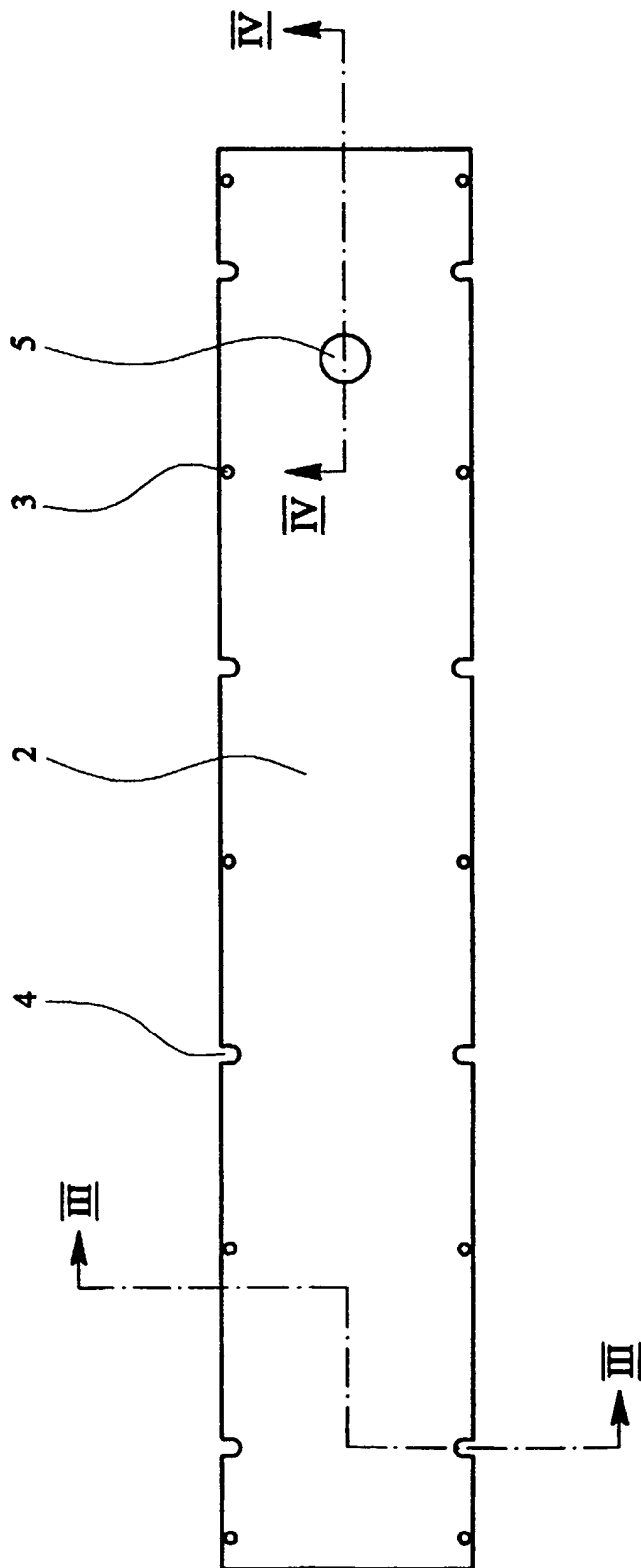


FIG. 2

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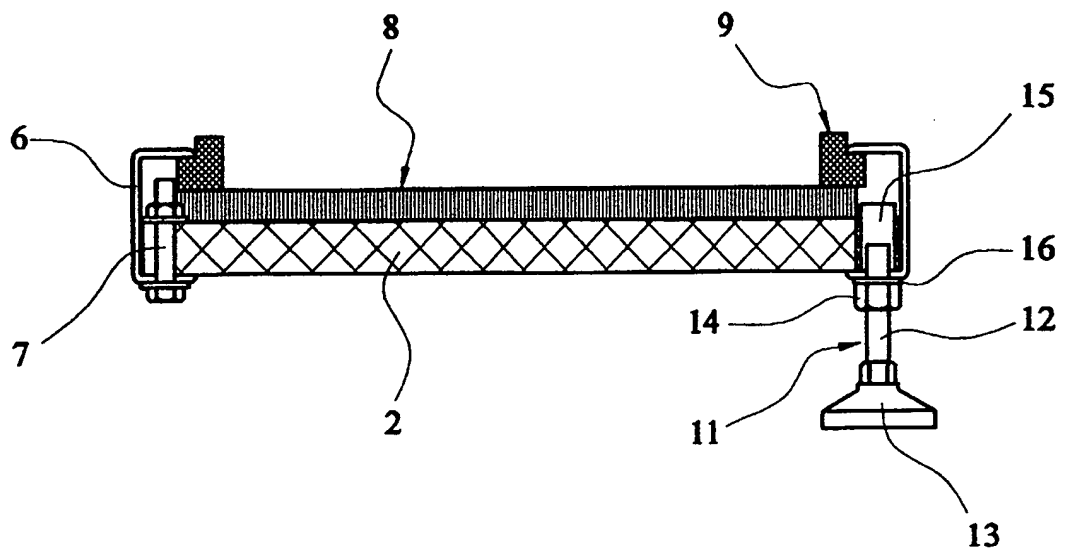


FIG. 3

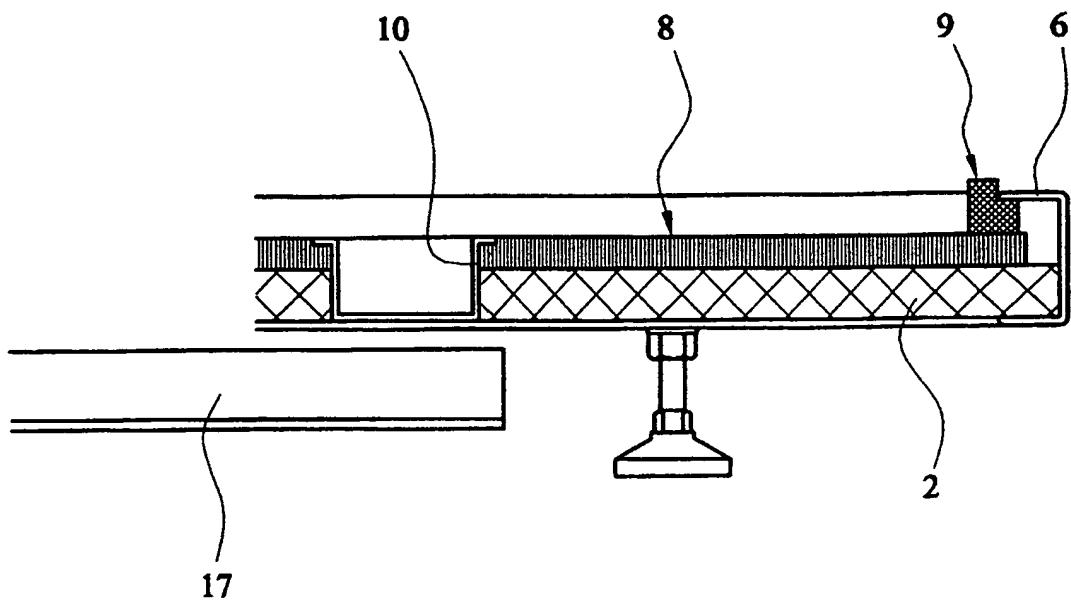


FIG. 4

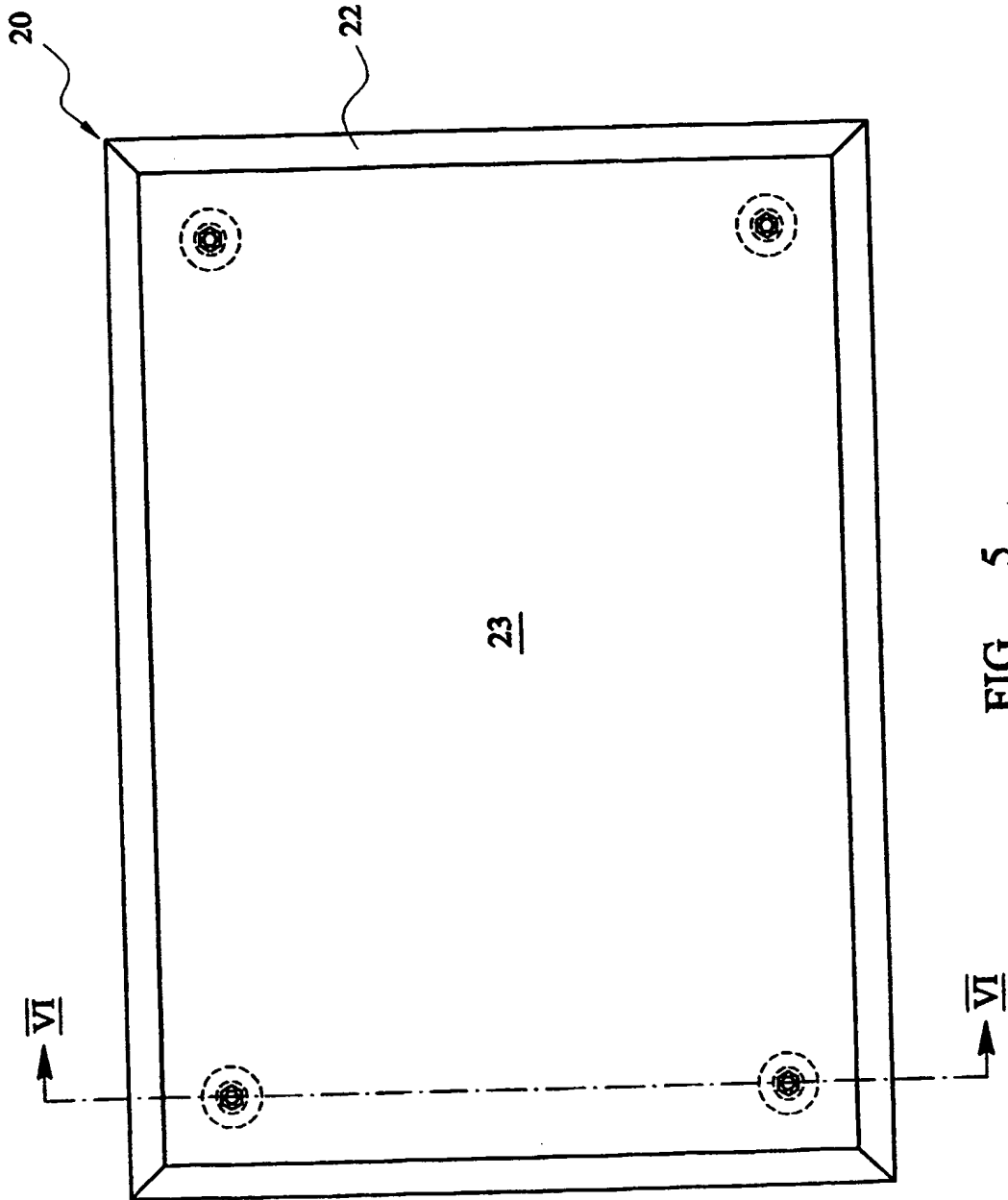


FIG. 5

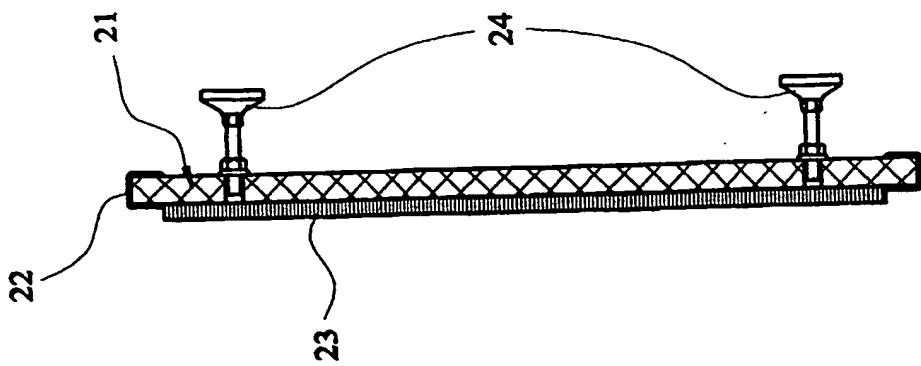


FIG. 6

Improvements in or relating to the game of golf

This invention relates to the game of golf and is concerned with a device to assist golfers in striking the ball correctly.

When hitting a golf ball, the stance of the player and the manner in which the player approaches the ball are of the utmost importance. However, even if the player adopts the appropriate stance and approach, the ball will not necessarily move in the required direction and at the required speed because of irregularities in the surface of the green over which the ball has to travel. Thus it is difficult for the player to deduce, from the movement of the ball, that the stance and approach he had adopted was correct.

It is an object of the invention to provide a device which will substantially eliminate these irregularities so that the direction and speed of the ball, when struck, more accurately reflects the correctness of the stance and approach adopted by the player when striking the ball.

According to the present invention, a practice putting green comprises a planar member having a smooth surface, said member being formed of slate or like material having a surface of similar smoothness to slate, a simulated grass layer superposed on said smooth surface, an aperture extending through said layer to receive the ball, and a means of supporting the planar member so that said surface is horizontal.

It is particularly preferred for the planar member to be formed of slate because it has a sufficiently smooth surface and is relatively inexpensive. However other materials of similar surface smoothness can be used such as marble.

The simulated grass may be in the form of a backing material to which

fibres are attached so that they are generally perpendicular to the backing material. The fibres are preferably formed of synthetic plastics material and are flexible rather than rigid so as not to interfere with the true running of the ball. An example of simulated grass of this type is a synthetic sports surface known as Match-Winner and available from Play – Rite Ltd. of Liversedge, West Yorkshire, U.K. This is a vertical loop, structured, scrim reinforced needlepunch material having a backing thickness of 4.0mm and a polypropylene pile of thickness 11.0mm. Another material which may be used is that known under the Trade Mark Astroturf. In another embodiment the simulated grass may be in the form of a bowling carpet. A suitable material of this type is a 7.00mm thick felt available from Le Feutre S.A. in France. This includes a backing material formed of a wool/ polyester/ viscose mixture and a playing surface formed of wool. If desired, green baize such as is used on billiard tables may be used as the simulated grass. However in this case, the speed of the ball will generally be much greater than when rolling over the turf of a natural putting green and this is less desirable.

In an embodiment, the planar member is mounted in a frame of, for example, a metal such as aluminium and the means for supporting the member is in the form of feet depending from the frame and of adjustable length.

Preferably the practice putting green is associated with a platform having an upper surface substantially coplanar with the surface of the planar member and on which the player can stand. It is preferred that the platform should not be attached to the practice putting green so that any movement of the platform as the player steps on and off it is not transmitted to the planar member and hence the horizontal disposition of the planar member is not disturbed.

In use of the practice putting green, the player stands adjacent to one end of the green , preferably on the standing platform if provided, places a golf ball on the green and hits the ball towards the aperture adopting what he/she believes to be the appropriate stance and approach. Because of the smoothness of the planar member, the ball will run true and, if struck correctly, will enter the aperture. Thus the player instantly knows whether or not his/her stance and approach was correct and , if they are not, and consequently the ball has not entered the aperture, the player can try again with an altered stance and/or approach .

It is preferred for the practice putting green to include a means of returning the ball, after it has passed through the aperture, back towards where the player stands.

For a better understanding of the invention and to show how the same may be carried into effect, reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a practice putting green in combination with a standing platform in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 is a plan view of the practice green of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a cross-section through the practice putting green of Figure 2 along line III - III;

Figure 4 is a cross-section through the practice putting green of Figure 2 along the line IV-IV;

Figure 5 is a plan view of the standing platform of Figure 1, and

Figure 6 is a cross-section through the standing platform of Figure 5 along the line VI-VI.

Referring now to Figures 1 to 4, there is shown a practice putting green 1 comprising a planar member 2 formed of two pieces of slate fitted together end to end (only one of the pieces is shown in Figure 2). Each piece of slate has a length of about 1.8 m and a width of about 0.4 m . The use of more than one piece of slate in this way facilitates transport of the slate and installation and erection of the practice putting green . A plurality of holes 3 is drilled at intervals along the lateral edges of each sheet. Also a plurality of U-shaped slots 4 is provided at the lateral edges of each sheet inbetween the holes 3.

One of the pieces of slate includes an aperture 5 on its centre line at a distance of about 265 mm from its end most remote from the other piece of slate. The planar member 2 sits in a frame 6 formed from aluminium channel section and arranged around the periphery of the planar member. The planar member is secured to the frame by fixing bolts 7 passing through the holes 3.

A layer 8 of simulated grass (such as Match-Winner) is located on the upper surface of the planar member 2 and is held in position by a resilient cushion 9 formed of rubber or the like fitted to the frame 6. The simulated grass layer 8 has an aperture in registry with the aperture 5 in the slate and a cup 10 of plastics material is fitted into the apertures.

A plurality of adjustable levelling feet 11 is provided. Each of these feet 11 comprises a threaded shank 12 terminating at one end in a base portion 13 for engaging with the floor. A nut 14 is threadingly engaged with the shank 12 and supports a sleeve 15 on the shank. The sleeve has an abutment in the form of a flange 16 at its lower end. The sleeve 15 has an external dimension such that it will fit through a hole provided in the frame 6, in registry with one

of the slots 4 , and the underside of the frame 6 will sit on the flange 16 . The sleeve 15 can be caused to traverse along the shank 12 by rotating the nut 14 thereby effectively altering the length between the base portion 13 and the flange 16.

If desired, the cup 10 can be replaced by an open-ended sleeve (not shown) in which case a ball return chute 17 (see Figure 4) may be provided under the planar member 2 so that one end is located beneath the sleeve and the other end protrudes from under the planar member 2 nearer the player. By ensuring that the chute is suitably inclined, any balls passing through the aperture 5 are delivered back towards the player.

Referring now to Figures 5 and 6, there is shown a standing platform 20 for use in association with the practice putting green. The platform 20 is of a size of about 0.85 m by 0.60 m and is formed of a wooden panel 21 held in a frame 22 formed of aluminium channel section . A layer of simulated grass 23 is provided on top of the panel and the platform is supported on four adjustable levelling feet 24 , similar to feet 11 , located one at each corner.

In use, the levelling feet 11 of the practice putting green are adjusted , by suitably rotating the nuts 14 , so that the upper surface of the planar member 2 is entirely horizontal . The standing platform 20 is then positioned alongside , but spaced from , that end of the practice putting green most remote from the cup 10 and the levelling feet 24 are adjusted so that the standing platform is horizontal and coplanar with the practice putting green. The player stands on the platform 20 , places a golf ball on the practice putting green in front of him/her and hits the ball towards the cup 10 after having adopted what he/she believes to be the appropriate stance and approach. Since the surface of the

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planar member 2 is completely smooth and horizontal , there is no interference with the run of the ball . Thus, if the ball fails to enter the cup 10, the reason for this is entirely because of the stance and approach of the player . The player can therefore modify his/her stance and /or approach and try again until he/she can consistently put the ball in the cup.

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Claims:

1. A practice putting green comprising a planar member having a smooth surface , said member being formed of slate or like material having a surface of similar smoothness to slate , a simulated grass layer superposed on said surface , an aperture extending through said layer to receive the ball , and means for supporting the planar member so that said surface is horizontal.
2. A practice putting green as claimed in claim 1 wherein the simulated grass comprises a backing material to which fibres are attached so that they are generally perpendicular to the backing material.
3. A practice putting green as claimed in claim 1 wherein the simulated grass is a felted material.
4. A practice putting green as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the planar member is located in a frame extending around its periphery.
5. A practice putting green as claimed in claim 4 wherein the frame is formed of metal channel sections.
6. A practice putting green as claimed in claim 5 wherein the metal is aluminium .
7. A practice putting green as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 6 wherein the frame also accommodates a cushion of resilient material which retains the simulated grass in position on the planar member.
8. A practice putting green as claimed in any preceding claim wherein said means of supporting the planar member is in the form of a plurality of

adjustable feet located around the periphery of the planar member .

9. A practice putting green as claimed in claim 8 wherein each of the feet is in the form of a threaded shank having a ground engaging portion at one end , a sleeve fitted to the shank and having an abutment supporting the planar member , and a nut threadingly engaged on the shank between the base portion and the sleeve whereby rotation of the nut causes the sleeve to be displaced along the shank.

10. A practice putting green as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the aperture is in the form of an open ended sleeve and the green includes an inclined chute having an end in registry with and below the aperture to return the ball.

11. A practice putting green as claimed in claim 1 substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in Figures 1 to 6 of the accompanying drawings.

12 A kit of parts for assembly into a practice putting green as claimed in any preceding claim.



Application No: GB 0119089.1
Claims searched: 1-12

Examiner: Margaret Phillips
Date of search: 14 January 2002

Patents Act 1977

Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.T): A6D

Int Cl (Ed.7): A63B 69/36

Other: ONLINE: EPODOC, WPI, JAPIO

Documents considered to be relevant:

| Category | Identity of document and relevant passage | Relevant to claims |
|----------|---|--------------------|
| X | GB 2224450 A (PAOILLIO) Whole document | 1,2,4 |
| X | GB 2121297 A (CAROLAN) Whole document | 1-5 |
| X | WO 01/10516 A1 (HONG & YOON) Whole document | 1,2,4,10 |
| X | US 5445381 (VAN ERT) Whole document | 1,3,6,8,9 |
| X | US 5431403 (PELZ) Whole document | 1,3,4,8,9 |
| X | US 3727917 (MACLEAN) Whole document | 1,3,4, |

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